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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Landmark/District:	<b>Cleveland Park Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	<b>3028 Newark Street, NW</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	<b>January 28, 2016</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	<b>16-141</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Frances McMillen</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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Applicants Peter and Cathy Toren, with drawings prepared by Everett Garden Designs, request concept review for adding rear terraces and retaining walls to 3028 Newark Street, NW in the Cleveland Park Historic District.

**Property Description**

Designed by E.B. Sherman and built by Preston Winfield in 1909, 3028 Newark Street NW is a two-story house with a hipped roof. A one-story deck and basement level patio are located at the rear of the property. The rear of the lot slopes steeply to the south towards Macomb Street and Ross Place.

**Proposal**

The proposal calls for a small extension of the existing basement level rear patio and the construction of a two-level terrace in the rear yard. The terraces would be supported by retaining walls ranging in height from 2' to 6'. Aluminum railings would line the walls and would be 36" tall. The walls would be clad with Coventry Dakota Blend wall blocks. The patios would be flagstone and Delaware Valley gravel.

**Evaluation**

Over the last several years the Board has evaluated several rear additions and pool and landscaping proposals at properties whose rear yards are a part of the ravine located to the west of the subject property between Newark and Macomb Streets. The ravine is not public parkland, but rather a landscape feature divided amongst private property owners. Some of the earlier proposals have generated concern among the community and the Board for their potential impact on the ravine and how sensitively and successfully the proposals have responded to retaining this distinctive topographical feature. Much of the concern followed the construction of two retaining walls in the rear yard of 3316 Newark Street, NW completed in 2005. That project, approved by HPO staff, unfortunately resulted in a substantial change to the natural topography of the ravine behind the house, which was not entirely evident from the plans.

Unlike the earlier proposals in the ravine, which were highly visible from surrounding private property but largely concealed from public space, the rear yard of 3028 Newark Street is visible

from Ross Place. While the largest horizontal section (27') of the terrace wall faces Macomb Street and will largely be obscured by existing vegetation, the 6' tall terrace walls and 36" railings will be seen from vantage points along the street. As currently proposed the railings will sit directly atop and coplanar with the walls, compounding the height and visual impact of the proposal.

HPO has discussed options for softening the appearance of the walls, such as rounding their corners and edges so they respond more to the topography, or introducing exterior planters to the highest and most visible sections of the wall to break up their verticality. The applicants have raised concerns about these suggestions that they would result in a loss of usable space, or as with the idea of a lower planter, result in an area that would be difficult to access for regular maintenance. If these suggestions are not feasible, additional measures for consideration could include additional plantings, using an iron railing (which has a thinner profile than aluminum), setting the railing back from the edge of the terrace, and canting the angle of the walls to soften their profile and help blend them in with the topography.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO seeks the Board's guidance on whether the proposal is sufficiently compatible as proposed, or whether further mitigation of its impact as suggested above is necessary in order for it to be compatible with the historic district's topography.*